

eBay Addiction

Written by Dr. Kimberly Young

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eBay addiction is an increasingly worrisome category under the umbrella diagnosis of Internet Addiction. Due to the popularity of online auctions such as eBay, a growing number of individuals are showing signs of addiction related these sites in the past decade.

For the addict, winning the bid represents an emotional rush or high. It isn't the item but the experience of winning that keeps them bidding. Online auction houses create a stimulating place where users can conquer others as the highest bidder, which can be intoxicating as one beats out others in the last precious seconds to win the desired prize.

In moderate cases, eBay addicts will wake up at strange hours just to be there for the last remaining minutes of an online auction. "It was 5 am and I couldn't log on," explains one eBay addict. "I had a complete breakdown, I started crying, and my husband didn't know what to do with me. That's when I realized I had a real problem."

In more serious cases, eBay addicts feel a sense of accomplishment when they discover they are the highest bidder and begin to bid on items they don't need just to experience the rush of winning – sometimes to the point that they go into financial debt, take out a second mortgage, or even go into bankruptcy just to afford their online purchases. One client stole funds from her husband's 401K until he discovered her addiction. "He shut down my account and threatened to divorce me," she explained. "I was about to lose my marriage all because I couldn't stop myself from using eBay."

How Do I Know?

Because of the popularity of eBay and auction sites in general, it is difficult to know if you are dealing with a true addiction. The [Auction Addiction Test](#) will help you determine if the behavior crosses the line into addiction.

Where to Find Help?

Finding therapists familiar with how to treat Internet addiction is often difficult given that it is a relatively new disorder, and finding therapists who understand the unique dynamics of eBay

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addiction may be especially difficult.

Over the years, [Dr. Kimberly Young](#) has worked with several clients struggling with an addiction to online auctions. She examines what bidding means for the addict and how the act of winning may be fulfilling an unmet emotional or psychological need. In many cases, addicted users suffer from low self-esteem and winning makes them feel important and they gain personal recognition if they become a highly rated “power seller.” Dr. Young’s program utilizes a structured approach that helps clients’ redirect their energy into healthier outlets that boost their self-confidence and addresses the underlying psychological needs sustaining the addictive online behavior.